

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 6629

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: NATO MPOL

SUBJ: CHANGE-OF-COMMAND CEREMONY AT SHAPE

REF: USNATO 6558

1. CAUTION: THE LONG-STANDING UNDERSTANDING REGARDING PERMREPS LUNCH DISCUSSIONS IS THAT THEY ARE INFORMAL, WITH PERMREPS SPEAKING PERSONALLY IN MANY CASES, AND THAT THEIR UNINSTRUCTED COMMENTS WILL NOT BE REPORTED OR IF REPORTED NOT CITED BY NAME. RECIPIENTS OF CABLES REPORTING ON PERMREPS LUNCHES SHOULD NOT REFER TO PERMREPS LUNCH DISCUSSIONS IN CONTACTS WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS, AND PARTICULARLY SHOULD NEVER REPEAT NEVER QUOTE A PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE'S COMMENTS BY NAME.

2. AT NOVEMBER 26 PERMREPS LUNCH SYG LUNS, REFERRING TO A CONVERSATION AT THE PREVIOUS LUNCH, (SEE PARA 9 REFTTEL), REPORTED THAT THE SHAPE CHANGE-OF-COMMAND CEREMONY WOULD OCCUR AT 2:00 P.M. ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON, DECEMBER 15. ALL PERMREPS GROANED. DE STAERCCKE (BELGIUM) SAID THAT AS DEAN HE WANTED TO KNOW WHO HAD SELECTED DECEMBER 15 FOR THE CEREMONY. LUNS
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REPLIED THAT HE HAD SELECTED NEITHER THE DATE FOR THE CEREMONY NOR THE DATE ON WHICH COMMAND WOULD PASS FROM GENERAL GOODPASTER TO GENERAL HAIG; BUT THAT IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE CEREMONY HAD TO OCCUR ON THE DATE ON WHICH THE CHANGE OF COMAND TOOK

PLACE. DE STAERCKE, PECK (UK), SVART (DENMARK), HARTOGH (NETHERLANDS), AND SEVERAL OTHERS COMMENTED THAT A CHANGE-OF-COMMAND CEREMONY ON SUNDAY WAS UNUSUAL. DE STAERCKE WENT ON TO SAY THAT GOVERNMENTAL BUREAUCRACIES ARE OFTEN INSENSITIVE TO THE REALITIES OF POLITICS. HE SAID THAT SCHEDULING THE CHANGE-OF-COMMAND CEREMONY FOR A SUNDAY AFTERNOON DENIED GENERAL GOODPASTER THE HOMAGE WHICH HE DESERVED FOR FAITHFUL SERVICE TO THE ALLIANCE; THAT I DIMINISHED THE ATTENTION AND PRESTIGE WHICH SHOULD ATTACH TO GENERAL HAIG AS HE ASSUMES HIS IMPORTANT NEW ASSIGNMENT; AND THAT THE ALLIANCE AS A WHOLE SUFFERS AS A RESULT. DE STAERCKE THEN SAID FLATLY THAT HE WOULD NOT ATTEND THE CEREMONY UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.

3. LATER IN THE LUNCHEON, LUNS RECALLED THE CUSTOM OF HAVING THE NEW SACEUR MEET INFORMALLY WITH THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL AT AN EARLY DATE AFTER HIS ASSUMPTION OF COMMAND. THE SYG PROPOSED THAT HE INVITE GENERAL HAIG TO THE NAC MEETING ON DECEMBER 18. DE STAERCKE AND OTHERS AGREED THAT SEEMED REASONABLE. MCAULIFFE

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